

CONTACTS & LINKS

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For the **2007 OCC Annual Report**, other documents referenced,
or for an electronic version of this document,
please visit jobs.utah.gov/occ



Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling (801) 526-9240. Individuals with speech and/or hearing impairments may call Relay Utah by dialing 711.
Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162.

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2008 Legislative
Talking Points



Office of Work & Family Life
Department of Workforce Services
140 East 300 South
Salt Lake City, Utah
(801) 526-4340
jobs.utah.gov/occ
www.careaboutchildcare.org

Contact your legislator:
www.le.utah.gov/documents/find.htm

Learn how to talk to your legislator:
<http://localhs.com/legis/howto.asp>

Our Vision:
Quality, affordable child care is available
to every child in Utah who needs it.

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ABOUT THE OFFICE OF CHILD CARE (OCC)

Child care is a topic of importance to families, child care providers and policy makers. Availability of affordable, quality child care is directly linked to economic and social benefits for Utah: parents can work, employers can fill jobs, the tax base can grow and our children's needs for nurturing, supervision, socialization and intellectual stimulation can be met. Each of the OCC program objectives integrate aspects of these common goals:

- Help our children in child care grow up safe, healthy, and confident;
- Inform communities of their child care resources;
- Ensure our children in child care are engaged in developmentally appropriate activities;
- Support families in becoming self-reliant and contributing to their community and state economy; and
- Ensure our children in child care enter school ready to learn and succeed;
- Optimize all available funding sources.

DEFINING QUALITY CHILD CARE

Quality care promotes the optimal growth and development of children.
Aspects of quality care include:

- Warm, sensitive and responsive interactions between a well-trained caregiver and a child or youth
- Quality nutrition
- Stable, consistent relationships with a limited number of caregivers
- Stimulating activities which support learning through play
- Protecting children's health and safety through licensing regulation or other approved equivalent health and safety standards
- Safe and supportive physical environments

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WHY WE DO IT

- Utah has the **highest birthrate** in the country and the **youngest population**.
- There are more than **62,000** single parent families in Utah (**20%** of all families with children). Access to child care allows parents to work—and that stimulates the economy while reducing the burden on social services.
- Utah has the **highest ratio** of any state for children to total population (**26%** of total population is aged 14 and under).
- Quality care is crucial. Longitudinal studies indicate that children in high quality care do better in school and stay out of trouble.
- In Utah, **136,000** children need child care because both parents (or the only parent) work.
- **62%** of Utah women work outside the home.

ECONOMIC IMPACT*

Evidence of the link between an adequate supply of quality child care and the state's economy is ample. An independent study on the state of child care in Utah—its supply, demand, and effect on Utah's economy—clearly illustrates the need for high quality child care in Utah:

- The child care industry is a major contributor to Utah's economy. It has an estimated ripple effect on Utah business of **\$820 million** and **40,000 jobs**.
- **Earnings** of the labor force by about **\$480 million** per year.
- Availability of high quality child care helps **reduce employee absenteeism and turnover**.
- Across Utah, availability of regulated child care **increases the gross**

* For details, see BBC Economic Impact Study, 2005

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STRATEGIC DESIGN

• TWO-TIERED ELIGIBILITY: At the request of the Legislature, DWS researched two-tiered eligibility, which is a method to deal with the “cliff effect,” where a modest increase in wages disqualifies a working family from child care assistance. DWS is now working on implementing this initiative. A two-tier system will allow Utah to use a lower income limit when making eligibility determinations for families first seeking child care subsidies, and apply a higher income threshold as a family’s eligibility is periodically re-determined. This strategy will allow families to retain child care assistance while they still need it, rather than being penalized for making strides in their employment.

• “UNREGULATED” FAMILY, FRIEND & NEIGHBOR (FFN) CHILD CARE: Federal regulations allow families eligible for child care assistance to choose unregulated caregivers such as a family member or legally license exempt provider. These providers self-certify that they do not have a criminal history. Recent concerns have been raised about the safety and well-being of children in these care settings. Legislation will be introduced in the 2008 legislative session that will provide DWS with the statutory authority to conduct a background check of unregulated FFN providers. This will help ensure children are properly protected and taxpayer funds are appropriately spent. To see the complete bill, visit www.leg.state.ut.us.

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SUPPLY*

The state’s supply of child care is defined as the total number of regulated child care spaces. In Utah, demand typically exceeds the supply, requiring an increase in the number of available child care spaces.

Grants originating from OCC also help fund the creation of programs or add child care spaces to existing child care facilities. FY07 data follows:

Infant/Toddler Care

In FY07, the First Steps Grant supported 120 child care spaces:

- Created 88 new spaces equipped to provide above a minimal level of care
- Upgraded another 32 spaces (created before the grant opened); providing the resources to provide higher quality care
- 45% of all requests for child care at the Child Care Resource & Referral agencies are for infant/toddler age children; often there are no spaces for these children

After-school**

- 53 programs meeting high quality standards funded by Youth Connections grants
- 12 programs funded by the Kindergarten Match program
- About 8,400 children served in quality settings

FACT: DWS Needs Assessment data consistently shows need for Infant/Toddler and After-school program spaces across the state.***

* See OCC 2007 Annual Report for details.
** See BBC Out-of-School Time Supply-and-Demand Study, 2006.
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AFFORDABILITY

Affordability relates to the ability of Utah parents to pay for the child care services they need. Parents who cannot afford to pay for child care are forced to choose from three unsatisfactory options: leaving their young children at home with a sibling, leaving their children home alone, or not working at all.

KEY SUBSIDY FACTS:

- There are currently about 15,000 Utah children served by the child care subsidy program each month.
- The average subsidy payment is \$262.00 per child per month.

Utah Full-Time Monthly Average Child Care Price Ranges

Infant/Toddler	Preschool	Kindergarten	Schoolage
\$324 - \$1165 (\$540 avg.)	\$30 - \$758 (\$354 avg.)	\$229 - \$683 (\$381 avg.)	\$139 - \$650 (\$336 avg.)

PARTNERSHIPS

Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., has created a Governor’s Early Childhood Council as part of his Child & Family Cabinet Council. One of the areas of focus for this advisory body is early childhood education. Key aspects include:

- The Early Development Issue: A child’s intellectual, emotional, social and moral development is primarily shaped by experiences and education between birth and age six.
- The School Readiness Issue: Utah’s children need to enter kindergarten prepared to learn.
- The Need for Care Issue: For economic reasons, a very large number of mothers have to work and require affordable, high-quality child care.

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PRIORITIES

• TRAINING FOR CAREGIVERS: During the past year, **63,187** hours of low cost training was accessed by child care providers to enhance their professional development and program quality. That’s the equivalent of more than **30** years of 40-hour work-weeks. The Career Ladder and Training & Longevity Supplement (TlS) programs support child care providers by teaching best practices and rewarding them with wage supplements. ([Education](#))

• BETTER PAY: The average child care worker earns **\$7.88/hr** (DWS data, May 2006). Child care wages in Utah rank **433rd** out of 435 employment sectors in the state. Research indicates that there is a strong correlation between caregiver pay and the quality of care provided. This is often because better pay means reduced turnover, providing more stability for children. ([Economic Development](#))

• ACCESS TO HEALTH INSURANCE: Studies have demonstrated that benefits for child care providers are critical components to improving the quality of care to children and reducing the turnover rate in the field. ([Quality of Life](#))

• ADVISORY COMMITTEE: The Committee has representatives from all of the partner organizations (listed opposite), including child care professional associations, parents, small businesses, and the public-at-large. ([Governance](#))

These priorities integrate well with the Governor’s “Four Pillars” of Economic Development, Education, Quality of Life, and Governance (in [RED](#), above).

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